IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amend the claims as shown below. The claims, as pending in the subject application, read as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A storage unit which is detachable from an information processing apparatus having an ejecting unit configured to eject ~~means for ejecting~~ the storage unit, the storage unit having a storage medium for storing data from the information processing apparatus, comprising:

a controller for controlling storage of data into the storage medium;

a receiving unit configured to receive ~~means for receiving~~ an eject instruction to eject the storage unit from the information processing apparatus;

~~judging means for judging whether or not an operation which should be complete in the storage unit before the storage unit is ejected is complete; and~~

an invalidation unit configured to invalidate a connection with the information processing apparatus when said receiving unit receives the eject instruction;

a waiting unit configured to wait until an operation which should be complete in the storage unit before the storage unit is ejected is complete, after said invalidation unit starts to invalidate the connection; and

an output unit configured to output ~~means for outputting~~ an eject permission signal, as a response to the eject instruction, to the information processing apparatus for ejecting the storage unit by said ejecting unit after completion of the wait of said waiting unit ~~means if said judging means judges that the operation in the storage unit is complete~~,

wherein said ~~judging means is~~ invalidation unit, said waiting unit and said output unit are arranged inside the storage unit.

2. to 3. (Cancelled)

4. (Currently Amended) The storage unit according to claim 1, wherein said output unit ~~means~~ uses an extra signal line.

5. (Currently Amended) The storage unit according to claim 1, wherein said receiving unit ~~means~~ receives an eject command as the eject instruction.

6. (Currently Amended) The storage unit according to claim 1, wherein said receiving unit ~~means~~ receives a status of an operation switch as the eject instruction via an extra signal line.

7. (Currently Amended) The storage unit according to claim 1, wherein said receiving unit ~~means~~ further comprises:

a switch receiving unit configured to receive ~~means for receiving~~ a status of an operation switch; and

a notification unit configured to notify ~~means for notifying~~ the information processing apparatus of an operation status of the operation switch on the basis of the status of the operation switch that is received by said switch receiving unit ~~means~~.

8. (Cancelled)

9. (Currently Amended) The storage unit according to claim 6, wherein the operation switch is arranged in the storage unit.

10. (Currently Amended) An information processing apparatus which allows detaching of a storage unit as defined in claim 1, comprising:

a providing unit configured to provide ~~means for providing~~ a user interface;

an issuing unit configured to issue ~~means for issuing~~ the eject instruction to the storage unit in accordance with a user operation to the user interface; and

an eject unit configured to eject ~~means for ejecting~~ the storage unit on the basis of the eject permission signal which is output from the storage unit in accordance with the eject instruction.

11. (Currently Amended) An information processing apparatus which allows detaching of a storage unit as defined in claim 7, comprising:

a monitoring unit configured to inquire ~~means for inquiring~~ of the storage unit as to a status of the operation switch, and to monitor ~~monitoring~~ a status signal representing the status of the operation switch;

an issuing unit configured to issue ~~means for issuing~~ the eject instruction to the storage unit in accordance with a user operation to a user interface provided by software or the status signal; and

an eject unit configured to eject ~~means for ejecting~~ the storage unit on the basis of the eject permission signal which is output from the storage unit in accordance with the eject instruction.

12. (Currently Amended) An eject control method for a storage unit which is detachable from an information processing apparatus having an ejecting unit configured to eject ~~means for ejecting~~ the storage unit, the storage unit having a storage medium for storing data from the information processing apparatus, and a controller for controlling storage of data into the storage medium, comprising:

a receiving step of receiving, by the storage unit, an eject instruction to eject the storage unit from the information processing apparatus;

~~a judging step of judging, by the controller, whether or not an operation which should be complete in the storage unit before the storage unit is ejected is complete; and~~

an invalidation step of invalidating, by the storage unit, a connection with the information processing apparatus when the eject instruction is received in said receiving step;

a waiting step of waiting, by the storage unit, until an operation which should be complete in the storage unit before the storage unit is ejected is complete after said invalidation step starts to invalidate the connection; and

an output step of outputting, from the storage unit, an eject permission signal, as a response to the eject instruction, to the information processing apparatus for ejecting the storage unit by said ejecting unit after completion of the wait of said waiting unit ~~means if said judging step judges that the operation in the storage unit is complete~~.

13. (Cancelled)

14. (Currently Amended) A housing apparatus which allows detaching of a storage unit as defined in claim 1, and which can be connected to an information processing apparatus, comprising:

an interface which realizes data communication between the storage unit and the information processing apparatus;

a transmission unit configured to transmit ~~means for transmitting~~ the eject instruction from the information processing apparatus to the storage unit; and

an eject mechanism which ejects the storage unit in accordance with the eject permission signal from the storage unit.

15. (Currently Amended) The apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the apparatus further comprises:

an eject designation switch,

wherein said transmission unit ~~means~~ transmits the eject instruction to the storage unit in accordance with operation of said eject designation switch.

16. (Currently Amended) The storage unit according to claim 1, wherein said receiving unit ~~means~~, after reception of the eject instruction, ignores a subsequent ejection instruction.